

EXPECTANT & SINGLE PARENT SERVICES

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

MANDATE

Services to expectant and single parents are available as per Section 9(4) of the *Child and Family Services Act*

PREAMBLE

- Evidence indicates that adolescent parents are at a far greater risk for domestic violence due to the fact that many of them are involved in emotional and abusive relationships. In addition, many if not all adolescent parents are subject to having received limited education and thus are more vulnerable to poverty and health-related problems.
- Enhanced parenting skills have a direct correlation to the overall enhanced functioning of the parent. The focus of the programming or services offered to these young parents who want to parent their child(ren) will be delivered from the philosophy that actively supports and encourages positive connections to their families and their communities in a culturally sensitive manner. It will be structured in a manner that puts baby's needs first and foremost, always recognizing the competing needs of the young parent. It will subsequently involve hands-on training and education of the parent, beginning with recognition and understanding of the normal developmental issues of adolescents and young adults.
- Counseling services, with a focus on decision-making and problem-solving, will be provided on an ongoing basis in an effort to provide these young parents with information that will assist them in both the short-term as well as the long-term. These services will be provided in partnership with other collaterals within the community which would include health and education. Assistance in the form of connecting the young parent to legal aid for advice and counseling regarding legal rights and responsibilities will also be offered. Outreach to community services such as the Adolescent Parent Centre, Villa Rosa, Resources for Adolescent Parents (RAP), and Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre's Adolescent Parent Support Program is viewed as a critical part of the services to be offered. Parenting groups will be offered with the focus on traditional teachings.

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OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

The objectives of the program will include:

- Early intervention with young expectant parents, providing greater opportunity to explore alternatives and options;
- Earlier assessment of risk thereby providing more opportunity for planning and intervention;
- Connecting young parents to positive role models within their community;
- Providing young parents with access to traditional parenting teachings and elders if and where appropriate for the adolescent;
- Provide adolescent parents with an enhanced knowledge of parenting, e.g. assist as well as “hands-on” strategies, thereby enhancing the overall level of care provided to their infant; and
- Achieving an overall reduction of the number of adolescent pregnancies.

A continuum of services would be provided from the time of referral until the child is one year of age or until the young mother reaches the age of 18 years, whichever comes first.

Agency initiatives in prevention are clearly articulated in agency planning processes including specific target populations, goals, strategies and anticipated outcomes. Planning and implementing prevention activities are done in collaboration with other human services including:

- Community groups;
- Public health services;
- Medical practitioners or clinics;
- Hospitals or maternity homes; and
- Schools.

SERVICE GOALS

The goal(s) of these services is to ensure that expectant and single parents, who need assistance in caring for themselves or their child, will receive such help. This includes appropriate services to birth fathers, grandparents and significant others in order to:

- a) Ensure and protect the well-being and the rights of the child born to parents not married to each other, and the well-being and the rights of the parents;
- b) Ensure immediate needs of the child and parents are met;
- c) Anticipate and assist with any consequent problems for the parent, the child and/or community;
- d) Assist in the achievement of a satisfying and effective way of life; and
- e) Promote the normal growth and development of the child.

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PROGRAM EVALUATION

Expectant and single parent services are evaluated at least once a year by the agency. This may occur as part of an overall review of the agency's activities.

The results of the evaluation are put into a written report which is shared with the Board and staff.